

Whessoe Parish Council

MINUTES of the Annual Parish Meeting of Whessoe Parish held at Whessoe Parish Hall on Saturday, 11th May, at 3.00 pm

Present: Councillor S Goldfinch (Chairman) Councillor T Musson
Councillor F Minay Councillor D Woodley
Parish Clerk – B Goldfinch

Apologies: Councillor S Dawson Councillor J Bennett

Welcome

Councillor S Goldfinch welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting and noted that no members of the public attended.

Annual Report – Whessoe Parish Council

1. Introductions

- The outgoing Chairman thanked all Councillors for their work during the year in assisting her to fulfil her duties as Chairman.

2. Recent elections

- This was an election year for the Council
- We have 7 Councillor places - 6 x Harrowgate Hill Ward and 1 x Whessoe Ward
- Our 6 Councillors were nominated, and as there was no opposition or competition, they were deemed to be elected for a period of 4 years
- We have one remaining vacancy, against which we can co-opt, and are keen to encourage anyone who may be interested.

3. WPC AGM

- Follows on from this meeting, at which we will elect a Chairman and Vice Chairman for the coming year, alongside appointing Hall Management Committee roles.

4. Parish Clerk/RFO

- We have a vacancy for the Parish Clerk which will be advertised shortly
- We will be discussing the terms of this vacancy at the AGM following this meeting
- The Chairman thanked Bill Goldfinch for his services since last June as an unpaid Clerk. He's done a huge amount of work to move us forward.

5. So what have we done over the last year?

This has been a year of consolidation and introducing processes and a little more structure than we might have had before. We have:

- Rewritten all of our existing policies. We've ensured that they are compliant with current guidance but also tried to make them more concise, relevant and easy to understand
- Where there were gaps in our policies, or new requirements (like GDPR) we have developed new policies
- moved to a mainly online system of banking both for income and expenditure, and moved our bank reconciliation audit to an online system

Signed..... Date.....
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- Sorted through paperwork dating back to 1946, ensuring we've retained only what we need to do under GDPR while remaining legally compliant. This will make the work of a future Clerk (and Council) much easier
- Set up a Hall Management Committee - with separate ToRs, a separated budget and separate meetings to take forward improvements to the space and encourage more use by the community we serve
 - We've introduced new Hall Hire agreements and significantly increased the use of the Hall - with a significant number of weekly yoga classes being run alongside both adult and children's dance classes and a new weekly mindfulness session
 - Cleared a lot of very old rubbish from the Hall and lofts, demolished an old shed and provided new crockery, cutlery and glassware for Hall users, as well as a hot water urn
 - Introduced Hive heating to the Hall
 - introduced Wi-Fi to the Hall
 - Created a Facebook page to keep our community better informed
 - Removed and cut back hedging around the car park, making access to the car park easier through better visibility, and pedestrian access easier
 - Made a first stab at festive lighting
 - Held our first charity event -MacMillan World's Biggest Coffee Morning, raising £584

6. The coming year - as a Council

Our focus over the coming year is one of improvements and further consolidation.

- The review of all our policies has put us in a really good place, and we want to take this forward and start our journey through the Local Council Award Scheme
- We are introducing a new accounting system that will allow our Clerk to more easily provide financial and budget statements, generate invoices and track spend
- We will be creating a new, more user-friendly website hosted on a secure server (there's a regulatory requirement for us to do this), and we will aim to include things like a Calendar of Events, rolling news, and links to Hall bookings.

7. Our main focus - the Hall

We had hoped to spend some of the financial reserves we have built up on making some cosmetic improvements to the Hall - e.g. soft lighting and sound system and to start holding social functions to bring folk together.

However we've found a structural issue with the floor that means we must replace the floor in the kitchen and part of the Hall. We've already removed the concrete ramp to the back door that was contributing to the ingress of damp, and we plan to carry out the remaining works over the summer holidays when we have no classes running.

It makes sense while we are doing this to look at making the Hall more user-friendly, and so we plan to remove the current disabled toilet facility - which is poorly located - along with re-siting the meter cupboard to the outside of the building.

We've got the money to do that, and we have tendered for the works.

But we would also like to

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- reconfigure the toilet block to provide more modern, attractive unisex facilities incorporating a new disabled wc facility and baby change
- this would make better use of the space and allow for a walk-in storage area
- widen the main access door and door to the Hall to allow wheelchair access
- install dimmable wall lights
- install a sound system
- Fit new blinds to the main Hall windows
- redecorate throughout, internally and externally

We don't have the money to do these, but will be applying for grant funding to do so. If successful, we would like to be able to do these works over the summer, too, but may need to wait for the next break in classes.

We've tendered for all of these works and will be making funding applications over the coming weeks.

The Council are reviewing required improvements to the Parish Hall to help promote its use.

The financial position of the Parish Council is stable and both internal and external audit approved the 2016-17 Accounts.

Open Forum

There were no members of the public present.

Close of Meeting

Councillor S Goldfinch closed the meeting at 3.30 p.m.

Signed..... Date.....
Chair of the Parish Council